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From Goldfinger to Goldfarb

James Bond, who shot it out with a flame-throwing tank in "Dr. No" and with a helicopter in "From Russia With Love," will have to contend in "Goldfinger" with a laser beam. What's that? A laser (from "light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation") beam is really lethal, fellows. It can sear through a 3-in. block of steel in seconds, strip paint off furniture without damaging the wood—or melt human tissue instantaneously. This devil machine, invented by California physicist Ted Maiman, will be turned inch by inch on Bond (Sean Connery) by Goldfinger (Gert Frobe) as he lies spread-eagled on a table in the villain's hide-away lab in the Alps. And then . . . ? You'll have to wait for the picture.

Another hot property, but in a different way, is "John Goldfarb, Please Come Home!" which is in work at 20th Century-Fox. It describes the amusing adventures of a U-2 pilot (Jewish) who crashes in a mythical country (Arab) and winds up coaching the first all-Arab football team for a game with Notre Dame. Bill Blatty, the author, is an American of Lebanese descent.

As he tells it, "It all started at a barber shop in the Valley. I explained an idea I had for a screenplay to the business manager who handles Steve Parker's and Shirley MacLaine's affairs. He told me he wanted me to meet them. A week later I found myself telling the story to them.

Satire—Too Hot to Handle?

"I wrote 'Goldfarb' first as a screenplay. But even with Steve and Shirley connected with it, the studios were frightened. Basically, it's a satire on the State Department, the CIA, USIA and our foreign policy. Everyone was afraid we'd hurt various peoples' feelings. So at Steve's suggestion I turned it into a novel and it caught on.

"It took 'Tom Jones' and 'Dr. Strangelove' to break the fear of satire, which has been around for about 400 years. Now everyone's on the bandwagon. But for us it was a tough two-year battle to get this movie made."

Blatty, author also of "The Baby Sitter," has a four-script deal with Columbia and two more to write for producer Parker.

Fox wants in on "Doctor Dolittle," to star Rex Harrison for producer Arthur P. Jacobs and scripter Alan Jay Lerner—so the film will be a joint venture by all three parties. However, it will have to await completion of Harrison's "The Agony and the Ecstasy," also for 20th.